

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A video-signal recording and playback apparatus for recording and playing back a video signal of a television-broadcast program, said video-signal recording and playback apparatus comprising:

a recording mechanism configured to record a video signal onto an information-recording medium;

an extraction mechanism configured to extract a representative picture from a video signal to be recorded;

an attachment mechanism configured to associate an evaluation value to the representative picture extracted by said extraction mechanism, said evaluation value being indicative of a degree of likeness of the representative picture to other representative pictures;

a preservation mechanism configured to preserve a representative picture extracted by said extracting means in said information-recording medium; and

a thinning mechanism configured to reduce a number of representative pictures preserved by said preservation mechanism in said information-recording medium based on said evaluation value,

wherein said attachment mechanism is configured to associate the evaluation value to the representative picture by reducing other evaluation values of representative pictures adjacent on a time axis.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A video-signal recording and playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said extraction mechanism, said attachment mechanism, ~~[[a]]~~ said preservation mechanism, and said thinning mechanism are ~~capable of carrying~~ configured to carry out their respective pieces of processing concurrently with processing

carried out by said recording means to record a video signal onto said information-recording medium.

Claim 3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A video-signal recording and playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said attachment mechanism is ~~capable of attaching~~ configured to associate evaluation values to representative pictures in such a way that said evaluation values are dispersed along said time axis.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A video-signal recording and playback apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said thinning mechanism is ~~capable of carrying~~ configured to carry out a thinning process on representative pictures recorded by said preservation mechanism on said information-recording medium on the basis of resemblance of said representative pictures.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A video-signal recording and playback method adopted in a video-signal recording and playback apparatus for recording and playing back a video signal of a television-broadcast program, said video-signal recording and playback method comprising:

~~a recording step of~~ recording a video signal onto an information-recording medium;  
~~an extracting step of~~ extracting a representative picture from said video signal to be recorded;

~~an attaching step of~~ attaching an evaluation value to said representative picture extracted at said extracting step, said attaching including reducing other evaluation values of

representative pictures adjacent on a time axis, said evaluation value being indicative of a degree of likeness of the representative picture to other representative pictures;

~~a preserving step of~~ preserving said representative picture extracted at said extracting step in said information-recording medium; and

~~a thinning step of~~ carrying out a thinning process on a number of representative pictures preserved at said preserving step in said information-recording medium on the basis of said evaluation value attached by said attaching means.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A recording medium for storing a program to be executed by a video-signal recording and playback apparatus for recording and playing back a video signal of a television-broadcast program, wherein said program is a computer readable program, execution of instructions of program implement a method comprising:

~~a recording step of~~ recording a video signal onto an information-recording medium;

~~an extracting step of~~ extracting a representative picture from said video signal to be recorded;

~~an attaching step of~~ attaching an evaluation value to said representative picture extracted at said extracting step, said attaching including reducing other evaluation values of representative pictures adjacent on a time axis, said evaluation value being indicative of a degree of likeness of the representative picture to other representative pictures;

~~a preserving step of~~ preserving said representative picture extracted at said extracting step in said information-recording medium; and

~~a thinning step of~~ carrying out a thinning process on a number of representative pictures preserved at said preserving step in said information-recording medium on the basis of said evaluation value attached by said attaching means.